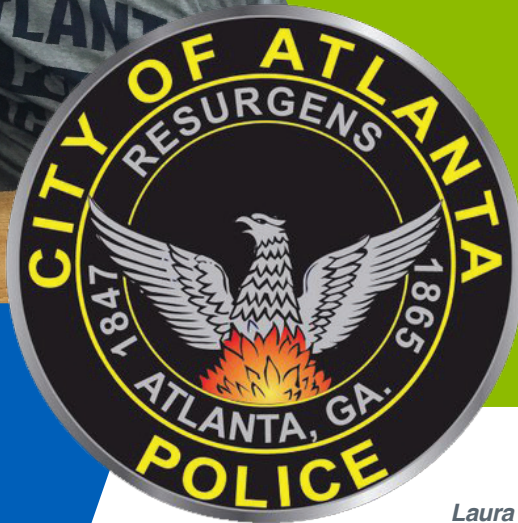


Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing Initiative: Atlanta Police Department



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INTRODUCTION

The Atlanta Police Department (APD) is one of 15 departments selected to participate in the Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing Initiative (SNPPI). SNPPI provides policy review, assessments, training, and technical assistance to a cohort of law enforcement agencies across the nation. The four goals of the initiative are to: (1) identify promising strategies that reduce crime; (2) protect officers' safety and wellness; (3) produce productive interagency partnerships with law enforcement and community stakeholders; and (4) implement innovative and effective technologies to help police departments safeguard neighborhoods. SNPPI began under the leadership of Chief George Turner (Ret.) and is currently being led by Chief Erika Shields. The purpose of this report is to highlight APD's accomplishments in the Initiative's four goals and describe promising practices for consideration by agencies nationwide. ■

METHODOLOGY

Each of the 15 selected departments is assigned a CNA Strategic Site Coordinator (SSC) and a CNA operations analyst to assist with planning, implementation, coordination, and delivery of technical assistance. CNA worked with the Atlanta Police Department to develop a customized strategy to capitalize on the great work already in progress across the four initiative goals. First, we looked at APD's policies and practices related to: crime reduction efforts, policy effectiveness, technological capabilities, training priorities, and officer safety and wellness strategies. The CNA team then helped identify training and technical assistance (TTA) opportunities, additional tools, and resources to enhance areas related to the principles of precision policing. The CNA team documented APD's implementation efforts throughout the initiative; lessons learned from SNPPI are contained in this report. ■

BACKGROUND

Encompassing 133.2 square miles, the city of Atlanta is the capital and the most populous city in the state of Georgia, with a population of approximately 440,640 people. APD has an authorized strength of 2,000 officers. Since the inauguration of SNPPI, APD has set in motion numerous strategies to address violent crime, address public safety issues, initiate meaningful partnerships, and further enhance the department. ■

“ Overall, APD saw an 8% decrease in part 1 crimes for 2017. ”

Atlanta Police Department Profile

Leadership: Chief Erika Shields
(since 2016)

Population: Approx. 440,640 residents

Area: 133.2 sq. miles

Sworn Officers: 2000+

Total Crime (2016): 29,925 offenses
- **Violent Crime:** 5,121 offenses
- **Property Crime:** 24,804 offenses

Website: <http://www.atlantapd.org/>

CRIME RATES AND TRENDS IN ATLANTA

Reducing violent crime in Atlanta is APD's top priority. In 2017, APD saw a 28-percent drop in homicides, from 110 in 2016 to 79; and a 26-percent drop in robbery from 1,910 in 2016 to 1,412 in 2017. Overall, APD saw an 8-percent decrease in part 1 crimes for the 2017. ■

CRIME REDUCTION: PROMISING STRATEGIES

Federal, state, and local partnerships

APD's Narcotics Unit works closely with its local High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) and the United States Attorney's Office to address and investigate illicit narcotics trafficking and distribution in the city. This collaborative effort allows for aggressive responses to and investigations of organized drug trade organizations that operate nationwide. This is a sustaining partnership that meets on a monthly basis and focuses on opioids, harnessing data from opioid over-dose deaths to lead to arrest and prosecution of perpetrators selling heroin.

Drug Market Intervention

APD implemented the Drug Market Intervention (DMI) strategy within the English Avenue neighborhood to combat open-air heroin drug sales. DMI targets overt drug markets with the goal of eliminating them and improving life for residents of the surrounding communities. Overt drug markets operate in public, bringing chaos, violence, and enormous damage to communities. The DMI strategy involves identifying specific drug markets and street-level dealers to make arrests of violent offenders. Officers and prosecutors work together to develop prosecutable drug cases for nonviolent dealers and agree to suspend prosecution for individuals who agree to

stop dealing. DMI has since removed career criminals from many neighborhoods and has given other offenders hope by connecting them with community-based social service resources. ▀

OFFICER SAFETY AND WELLNESS

The APD values all aspects of officer wellness and safety—safety in the field, mental health, and leadership development. APD regularly conducts health and wellness events, including a symposium on Officers Wellness in partnership with the Atlanta Police Foundation at Morehouse College. This one-day symposium fostered candid conversations about officer wellness and safety. It took place on the Morehouse College campus and featured free health screenings, health-related programs and workshops, activities for families, fun games, a marching band, and healthy food market shopping.

The APD requires a variety of training initiatives both at the recruit level and through its Professional Development Unit to promote safety and wellness. Stress management training is provided to recruits in conjunction with instruction on how to access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). In addition to the two hours of Health and Wellness lessons taught at the recruit level, APD offers an expanded Health and Wellness class (24 hours) to all sworn officers. The EAP staff has requested a clinician to be assigned to the Training Academy to develop expanded Health and Wellness training and provide stress inoculation and test anxiety during training in order to all aspects of training.

The City of Atlanta recently instituted a citywide initiative in the form of a drop-in health care center, which opened last year. APD is participating in the city's "Wellness Wednesdays" program, which encourages city employees to engage in healthy behaviors, such as getting flu shots. The new drop-in health center enables officers to get flu shots quickly and conveniently.

Atlanta Police Leadership Institute

Regarded as the most robust law enforcement leadership program in the country, the Atlanta Police Leadership Institute (APLI) is building the leadership capacity of the APD. APLI is a groundbreaking program established by the Atlanta Police Foundation in partnership with Georgia State University. As the expectation of police leaders continues to increase, so does the importance of this much-needed program.

The five-tier, leadership-focused curriculum is designed to develop a well-rounded understanding of APD operations and prepares mid-level leaders to manage confidently and efficiently the challenges facing today's law enforcement community. Officers who participate in APLI gain valuable skills in policy development, process improvement and mission-critical program design as they work through complicated public safety issues,



conduct focused research projects, participate in strategic placements in other city departments and learn from mentors in the business community. ▀

ESTABLISHING INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Strategies for Policing Innovation

APD participates in the federally supported Strategies for Policing Innovation (SPI), a project in which the department partners with Grady Hospital to implement a hospital-based retaliatory violence-prevention project. As the locations where many victims of violence seek medical treatment, hospitals and health care systems are uniquely positioned to address violence prevention. The partnership between APD and Grady Hospital focuses on identifying high-risk youth and young adults injured by violent acts and drug use within targeted zip codes and providing them with intensive, individualized case-management services. Participants receive risk-reduction assessments through community-based resources. In addition, the partnership engages community members to promote awareness of their roles in stemming the violence within their communities. The hospital implements prevention strategies immediately after the time of injury. APD has assigned two community officers to the project; the officers serve as a conduit for communication among investigators, victims, and community members.

HOPE Team

APD's Homeless Outreach Prevention Emergency (HOPE) Team Unit won the 2014 Georgia Crisis Intervention Team Leadership Award, recognizing its use of best practices in addressing homelessness in Atlanta. In partnership with the United Way of Greater Atlanta, Hands-On Atlanta, and the Atlanta Downtown Improvement District, the HOPE Team works with people who are homeless and/or have mental illness. Team members help homeless individuals identify short- or long-term housing options. The unit connects homeless individuals to services by partnering with a host of agencies like Gateway, United Way, Salvation Army, the Veterans Administration, and the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Georgia chapter. The HOPE unit and its partners have significantly reduced homeless-related incidents by more than 5,000 and created enhanced information sharing that has played a pivotal role in crime reduction for APD.

Community Councils

Each police district has established a community council to address crime problems in its neighborhoods; the councils bring together both police and community perspectives. The councils are tasked with identifying resources and strategies to promote public safety, including calling in tips, participating in the neighborhood watch program, or walking the beat with officers. Neighborhoods determine how to measure the success of their initiatives. The program has been successful throughout the city in linking citizens with local government agencies to reduce crime through actions such as improved lighting and trash removal.

At-Promise Youth and Community Center

The At-Promise Youth and Community Center opened its doors on August 1, 2017. The Center is a state-of-the-art learning and community facility with specialized services for youth and a gathering place for residents, group activities, and other

purposes, and represents a partnership with a multitude of Atlanta resources, including the APD, the Atlanta Police Foundation, Atlanta Public Schools, Fulton County Juvenile Court, Fulton County Juvenile Probation, and many community members. At-Promise brings police and community partners together to create pathways to success. This model focuses on three major areas: diversion—an alternative to arrest and probation; intervention—strategies to address behavior; and prevention—to promote and foster personal growth and development. ▀

IMPLEMENTING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Operation Shield

Through the expansion of Operation Shield, a citywide network of surveillance cameras and license plate readers, predictive policing platforms, and criminal analytics software, APD has enhanced situational awareness throughout the city. The Loudermilk Video Integration Center (VIC) is a cutting-edge facility that serves as the hub for Operation Shield. The VIC houses a team of analysts who manage the city's more than 10,000-camera surveillance network. Over a three-year campaign, the network will be expanded to an even greater number of cameras, providing unprecedented crime deterrence potential and the capacity to solve crimes and take criminals off the streets faster. The system allows for existing video surveillance cameras owned by private business partners to be integrated and monitored in a centralized location.

Social Media

The APD's website and social media presence are important vehicles for providing information to the Atlanta community. In recent years, social media followers have increased significantly, allowing the department to engage directly with community members and increase transparency. The APD website features real-time crime data, while APD's Facebook and Twitter pages push out important and timely crime information to the neighborhood residents.

Critical-Incident Response

APD provides the public with information immediately following critical incidents. Information is released regularly through various avenues, including press conferences, press releases, social media, and APD's website. Crime data is shared on APD's website and updated on a weekly basis.

FINAL THOUGHTS

APD has fully embraced the principles of the Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing Initiative and has made tremendous progress in precision policing through its focus on public safety and crime-reduction initiatives and partnerships, sound policies, and innovative crime-fighting strategies. Over the coming months, CNA will work closely with the APD to continue its implementation efforts.

SNPPI provides necessary resources and technical assistance to departments that seek to implement strategic approaches to crime reduction and community safety. When subject-matter experts and analysts provide the tools, resources, and information to support operational and policy challenges, police agencies have the time and space to focus on reducing crime and increasing public safety. ▀

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“The guiding principles of 21st Century Policing helped us make significant strides in re-building bridges with the communities we serve that had been strained by so many unfortunate events across our nation. Today, we are undoubtedly a more transparent, responsive and attentive department than we've ever been. Maintaining the public trust is a never-ending mission, and we have a great opportunity to continue our momentum through Safer Neighborhoods through Precision Policing.

— Atlanta Police Chief Erika Shields

